

way, there was an answer to it. The answer is actually better than you anticipate in the beginning, and the picture got better and better and better.

I do not think it is an overstatement to say that if you have a tax policy that can solve problems, this tax policy solves virtually every one that a tax policy can solve.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank both my colleagues for their help. This has been an illuminating discussion and we need to do it again.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1308) entitled "An Act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for working families, and for other purposes".

ELECTIONS: THE U.S. AND IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the time until midnight, which is approximately 42½ minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honor to come before the U.S. House of Representatives to be able to share a few things with the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we reflect on this period as we stand as a country. A lot has happened today and a lot will happen in the future, and I think it is important that we reflect on what happened today and the direction our country needs to go in and should go in.

We all know that there are 40 days and some hours, just about to be 39 days before the national election on November 2. I think it is also important for us to reflect on the responsibility that every American has to participate in that process. I would like to share with the American people that for a couple of weeks, we have not had an opportunity to have a 30-something hour, but I think it is important for us to address some of those issues that are affecting young people in this country.

I want to commend those organizations that are out there supplying information to voters between the ages of 18 and 30 to make sure that they participate in this election. What has been happening for the last 4 years, and what is going to happen in the next 4 years is very, very important for the future of our country and also for the future of our families.

I want to thank Rock the Vote and also the WWE Association, and many other individuals that are out there, like Mr. Russell Simmons, what the NAACP is doing, what the people for the American Way are doing, and also

thank what Puff Daddy and other folks out there are doing in making sure that people have good information. Voter suppression is very real, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is important for parents or grandparents or even Members of Congress listening tonight that we share with them that their loved ones who might be in school do have the opportunity to register to vote.

In the beginning of October, that clock is going to run out throughout the country, so we need to make sure they know they can register. We did have some supervisors of elections or those election officials in those local communities that were telling them they could not. Now we are getting that information out. I believe there is a 1975 Supreme Court decision that said that if one is in school and registered in school, they can be from another State, but they can register to vote there, because nine times out of ten during the early voting periods and the election period in early November, they will be there at that location.

Mr. Speaker, I have my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Cleveland, Ohio (Mrs. JONES), joining me here tonight, but I first just want to take a moment, since we are talking about democracy, to reflect on a country that we are saying that we want to institute democracy in. I think we should be very careful in being the promoters and also the hood ornament for democracy in the world. We are promoting elections in Iraq at a time when we know that it is very unsafe, not only for U.N. workers but for our U.S. troops and the very limited coalition that we have in Iraq right now.

On the floor here today, Mr. Speaker, we had the interim prime minister of Iraq addressing the U.S. Congress. He also went over to the White House and was with the President in a Rose Garden ceremony. It is one thing to be able to say that we have to be there for the long haul. As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I support the effort of making sure that we achieve our goals in Iraq. I may not support how we got there, which I do not, that being the preemptive strike, which is something this country has never engaged in before. There is no "may" about it, I do not. But I think it is important we reflect on where we are right now.

We have had the arguments, hours of arguments on this floor, of how we got there. I think the American people are fully aware of who made the decision and who decided that we should take a preemptive strike in Iraq, without a real plan that provided for a good measured outcome. The people who made the decision to go with the willing I think is something that we are going to remember in the future as it relates to the art of war and in taking a move like we did several months ago.

I could not help but reflect on the prime minister's comments today, and I also could not help but reflect on what was said at the Rose Garden

about the fact that we are ready for elections in January. Now, this is not the Kendrick Meek report, this is the report of many news articles I am holding here in my hand from the events of today. This is not only the reports of these news organizations but also of anyone turning on the television and looking at cable or at network television. Guess what, things in Iraq are not going as well as we are being told here around the beltway and in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I think it goes beyond my obligation and the obligation of all the Members here in the House, be they Republican or Democrat, to level with the American people about the realities of Iraq, the realities of taking on an effort in the Middle East where we have had terrorism for years and years and years.

Fact: Saddam Hussein. Yes, he was a bad guy and he needed to go. But at what cost? Fact: Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups were not running the streets of Iraq prior to the preemptive strike. That is a fact. That is not fiction. That is not the Kendrick Meek report, that is reality.

The President today said, well, we have to continue to fight the war in Iraq, because if we leave, then the terrorists will have a hub to be able to carry out terror on other democracies on the face of the earth. Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but to reflect and to comment on that remark. Who set that stage for that mecca or hub of terrorism?

Now, I am not here to point fingers, I am just here to say that the world community knows the reason why we have all the terror in Iraq right now, that could and would be and is a part of global terrorism at this particular time. And I think it is important if we are going to build a broader coalition now, and I want to make sure, because Secretary Rumsfeld today, I must add, was over in the Senate and he said, well, what is wrong with the elections? We can have elections in January, but what is wrong with having elections in some places and in other places where we cannot have them, it is not a perfect world, so let us just move on with the elections.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I beg to differ with the Secretary, in all due respect. That is not the way a democracy operates. Next thing you know, here in the United States, and thank God for the U.S. Constitution and some people of goodwill who would stand up against such an action, if it were said that, well, we can have an election in Georgia, Alabama, or Mississippi, but in other places we cannot have it, so whatever the results are from those States, then so be it. Those are the elected officials that will represent that legislative body or those cities in those areas or this country.

Mr. Speaker, we need to watch what we say. Just because we can say it, does not mean that it is right. It is very, very unfortunate that the Secretary of Defense feels that he can